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Stanek et al.

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(54) **METHODS FOR PROTECTING A GROUND SURFACE FROM EXPOSURE TO MATERIAL THAT MAY BE SPILLED FROM OR LEAK FROM ONE OR MORE CONTAINERS**

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
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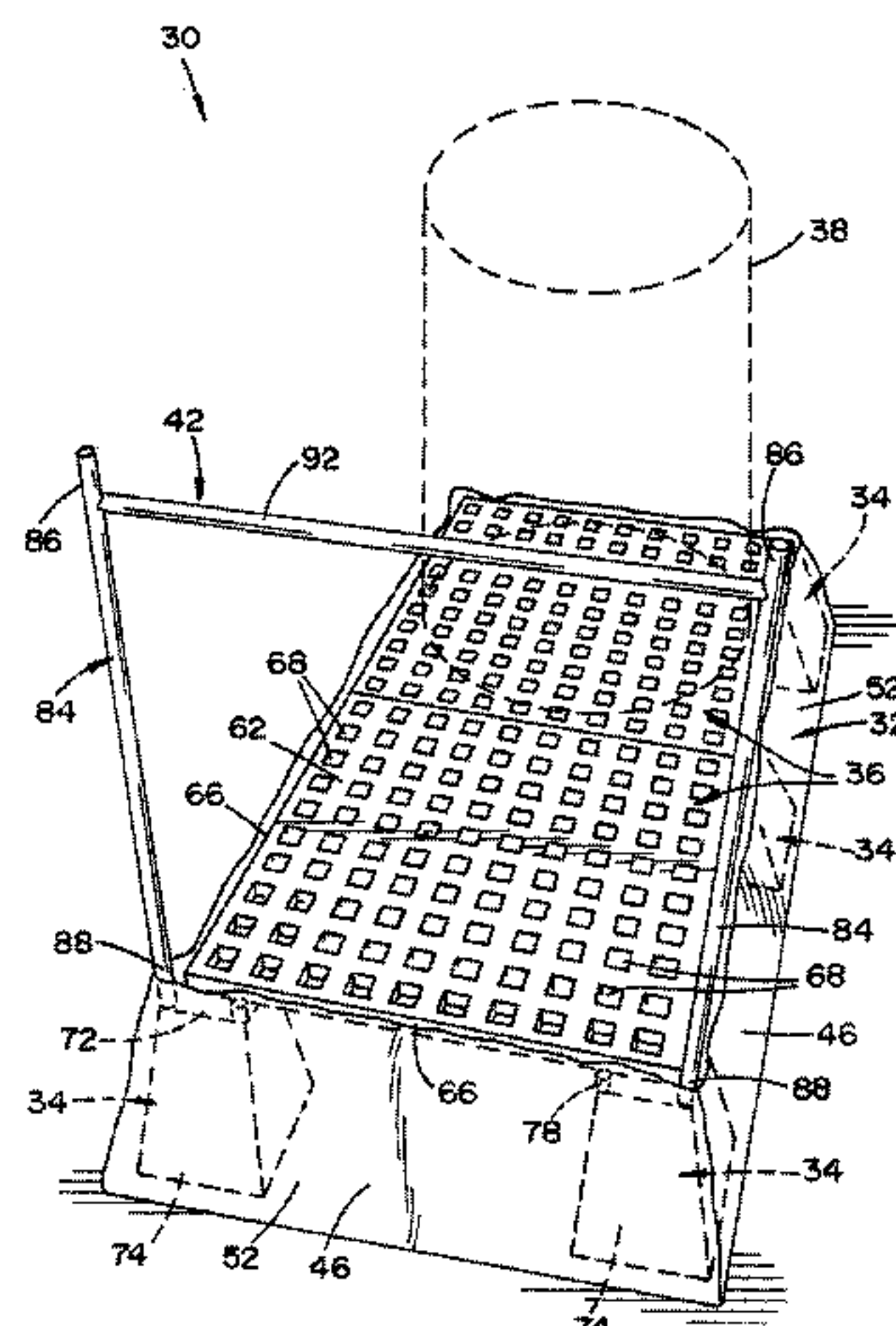
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B65D 19/06 (2006.01)
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Methods for protecting a ground surface from exposure to material that may be spilled from or leak from one or more containers, which includes setting up a portable spill containment system that includes at least one grate for supporting the one or more containers. The grate includes a plurality of drain holes. The portable spill containment system includes a flexible bag configured to contain spills or leakage from the one or more containers that pass through the drain holes of the grate. In one embodiment, the portable spill containment system includes a plurality of pedestals that support the at least one grate. In another embodiment, the portable spill containment system includes an interconnected grid structure formed of separate and distinct spaced apart beams.

10 Claims, 15 Drawing Sheets



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Field of Classification Search

USPC 108/55.1, 55.3, 55.5; 220/571.1, 571, 220/9.4, 9.1

See application file for complete search history.
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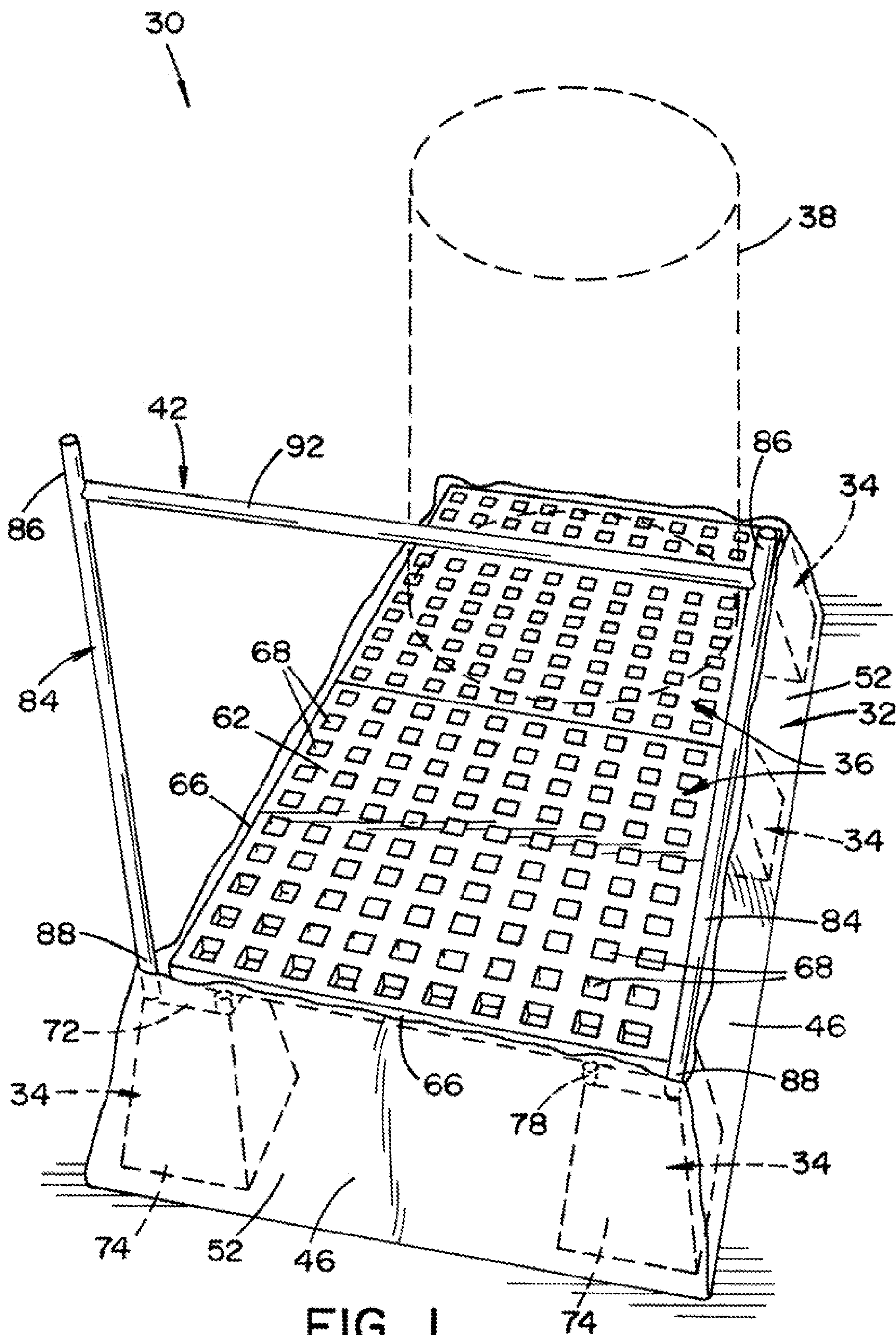
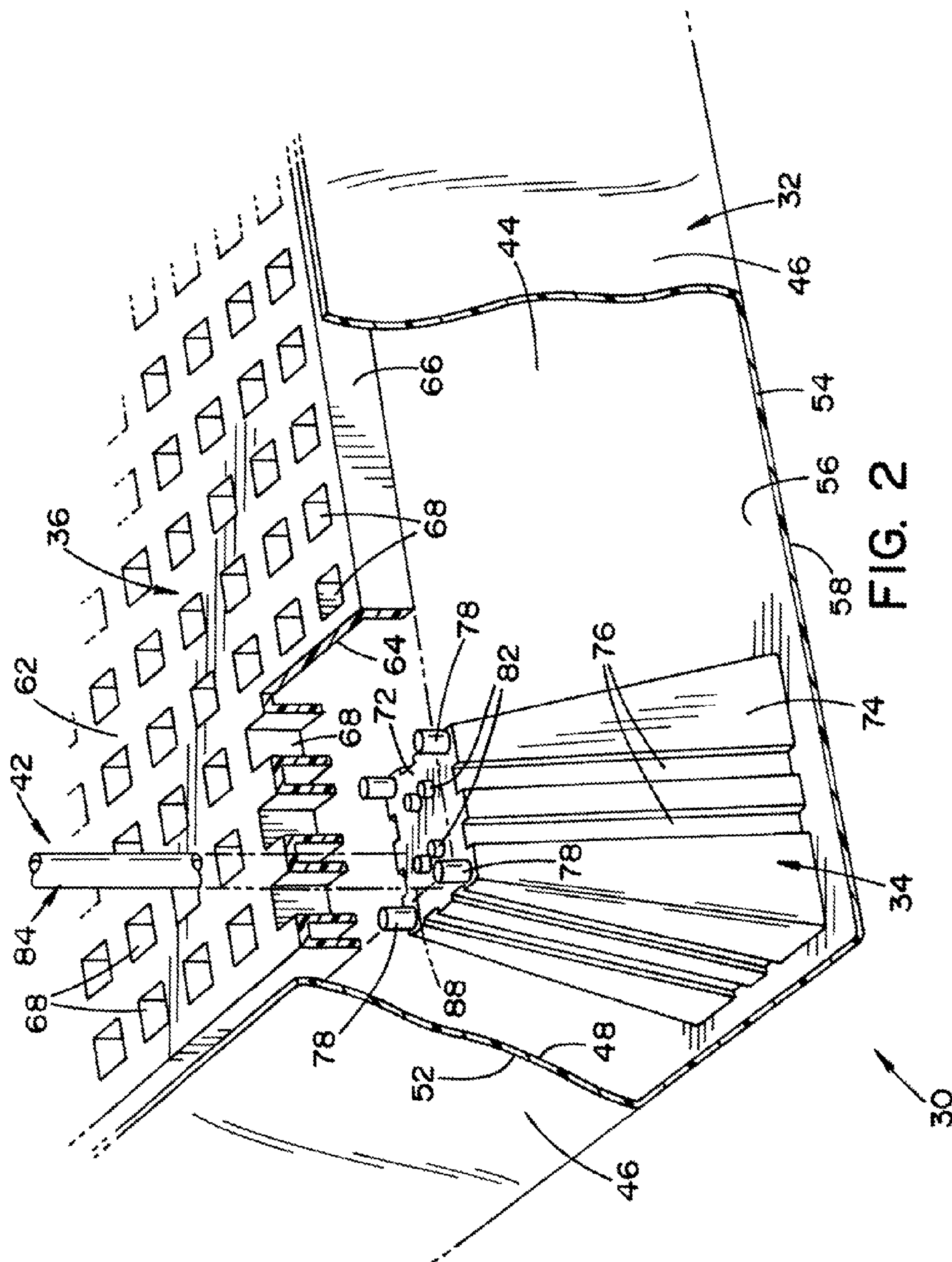
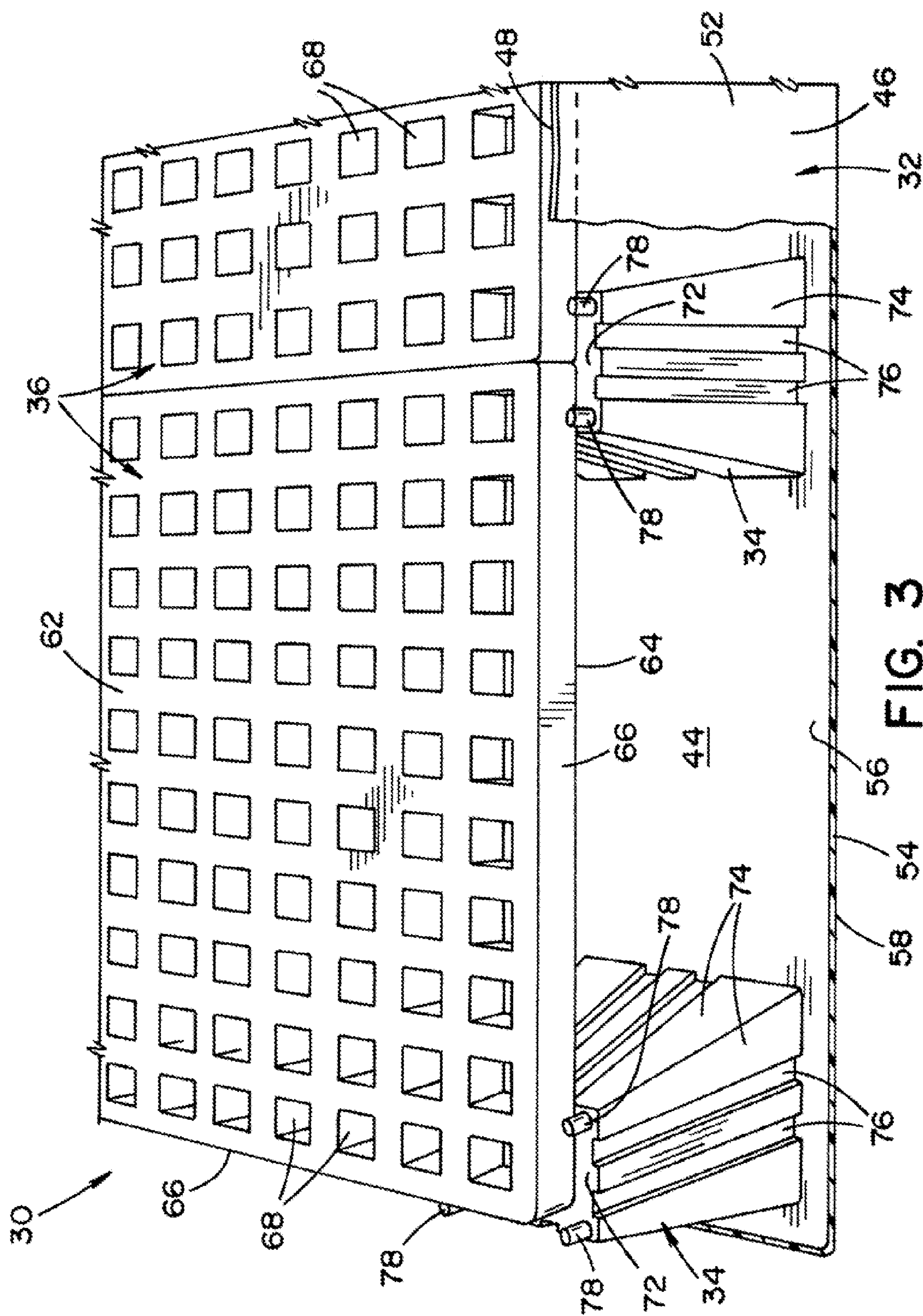
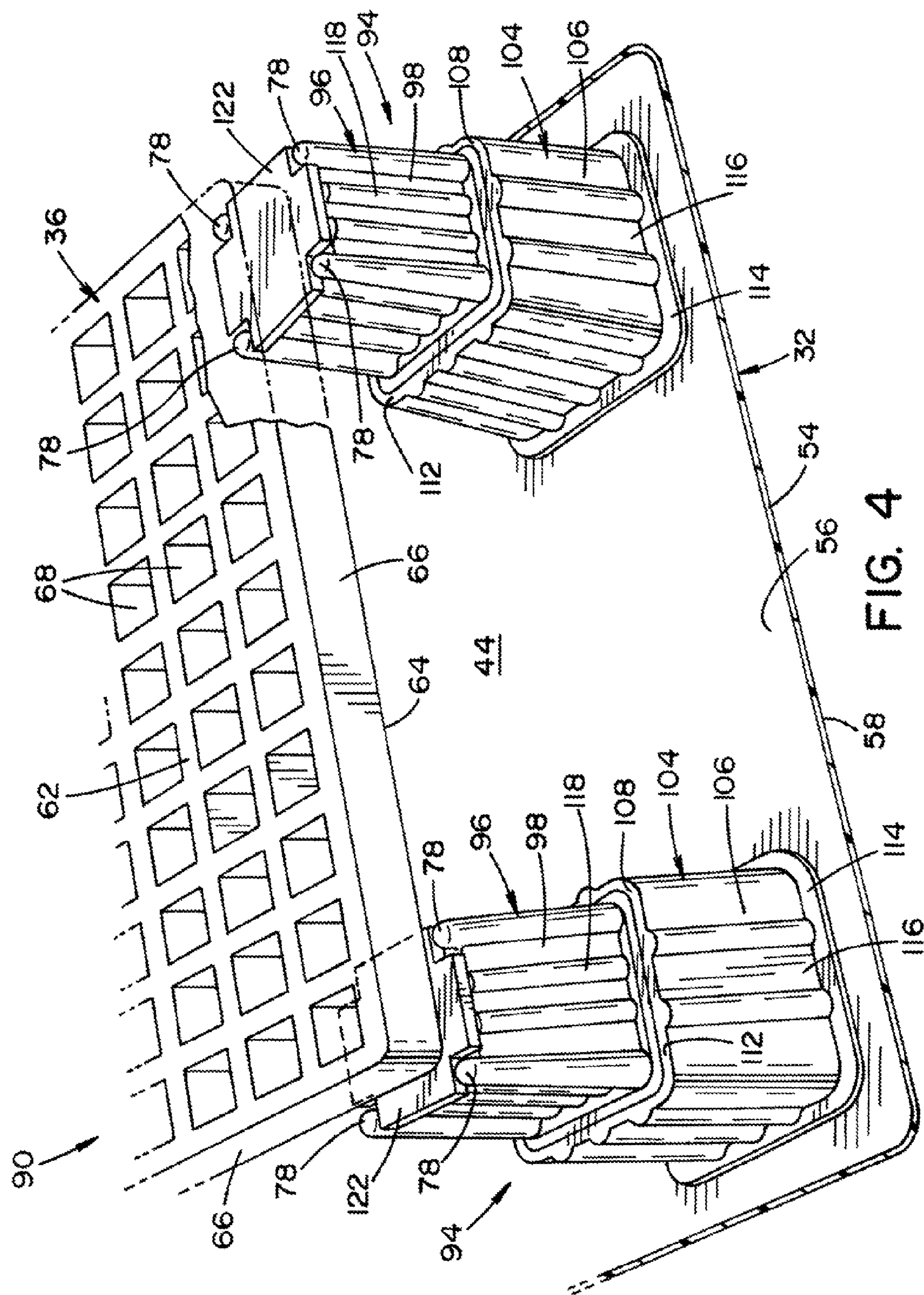
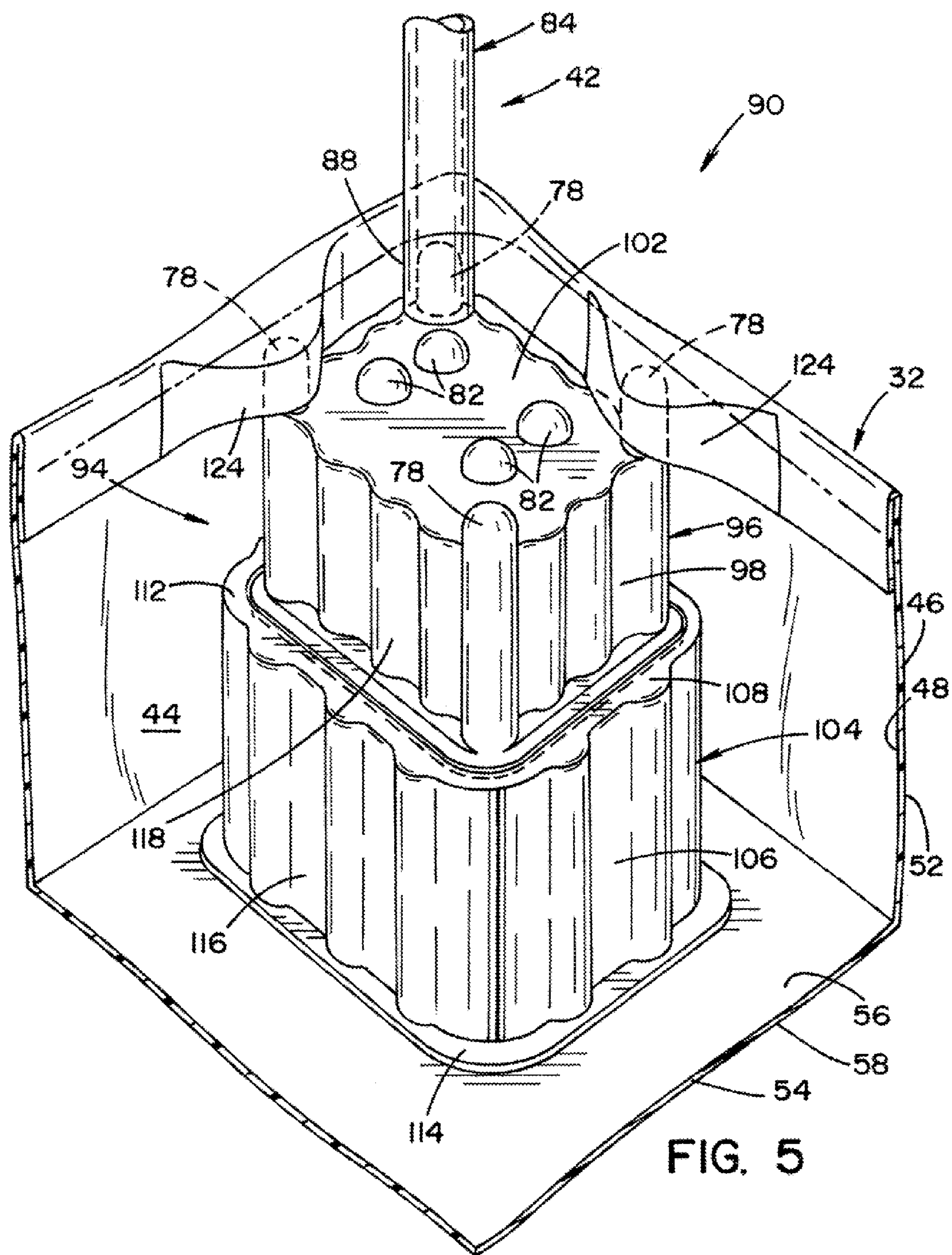


FIG. 1









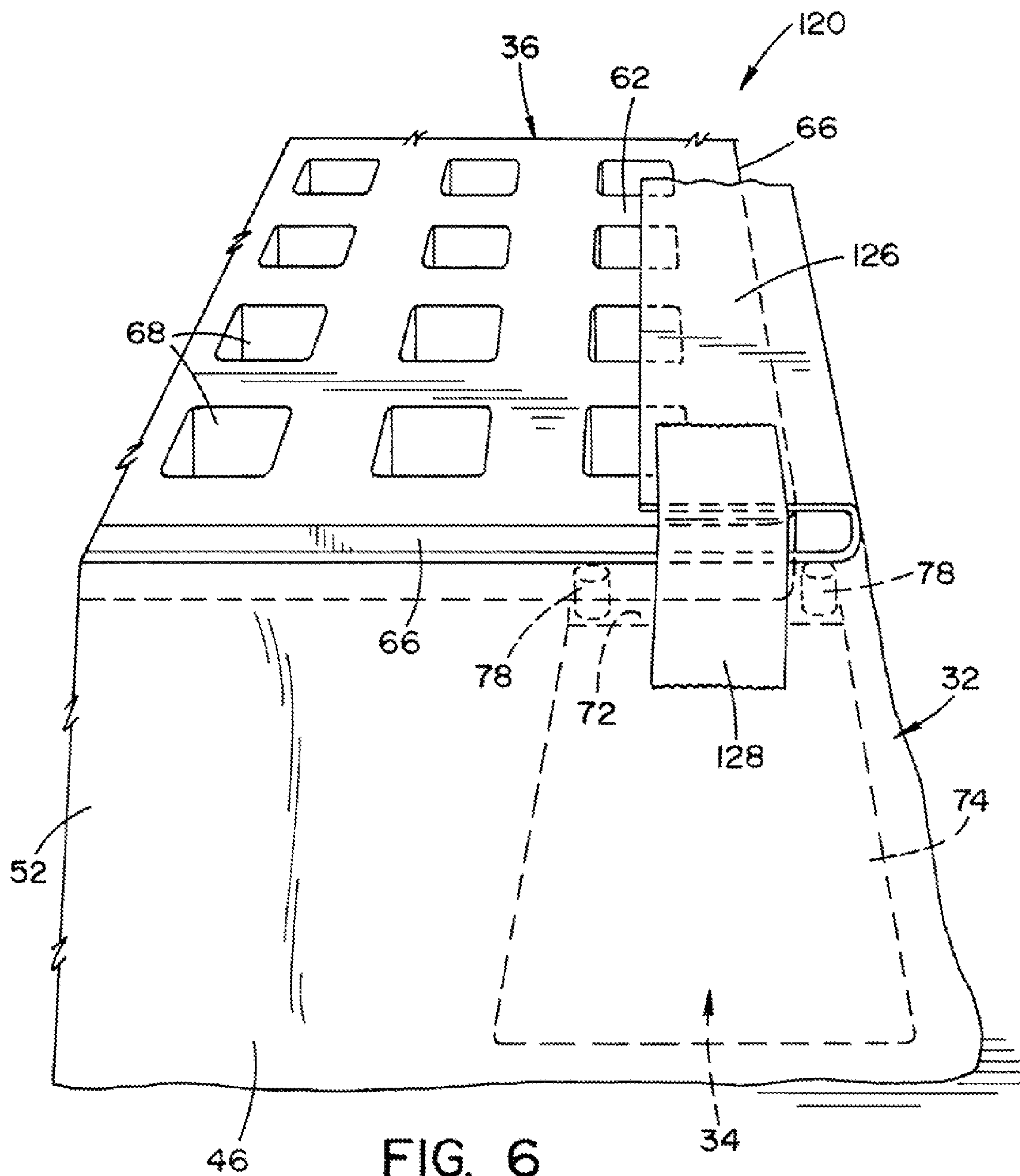


FIG. 6

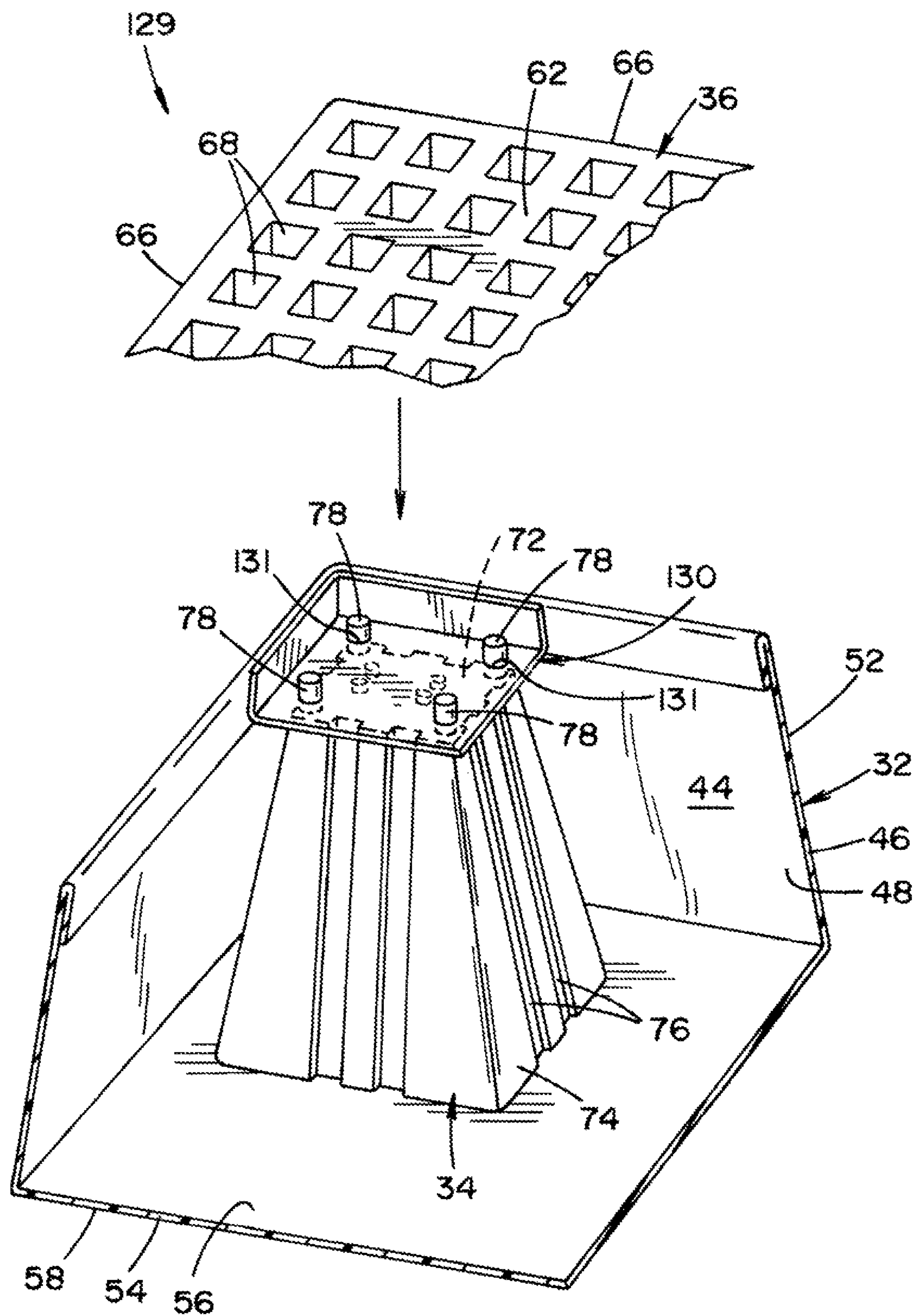
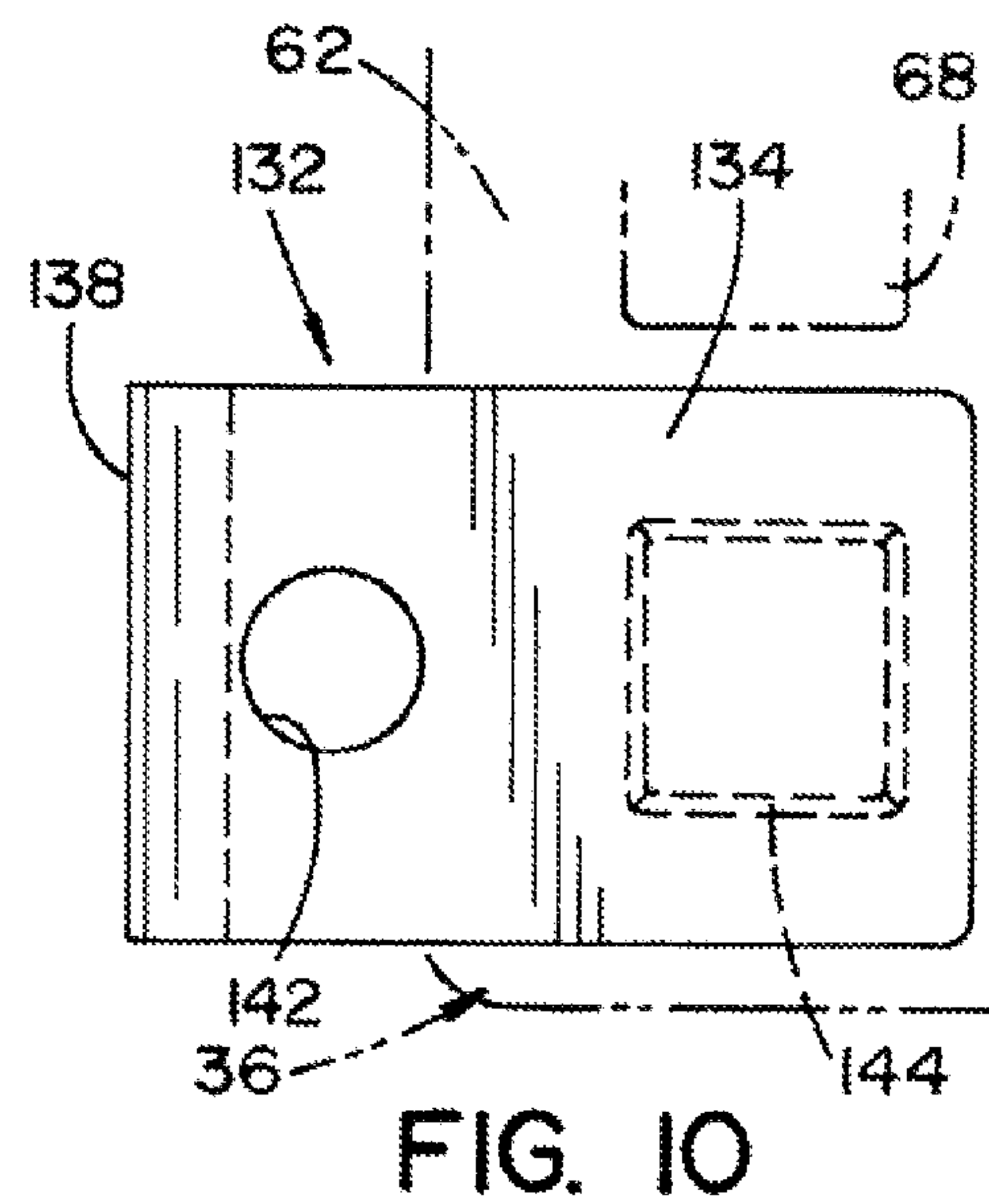
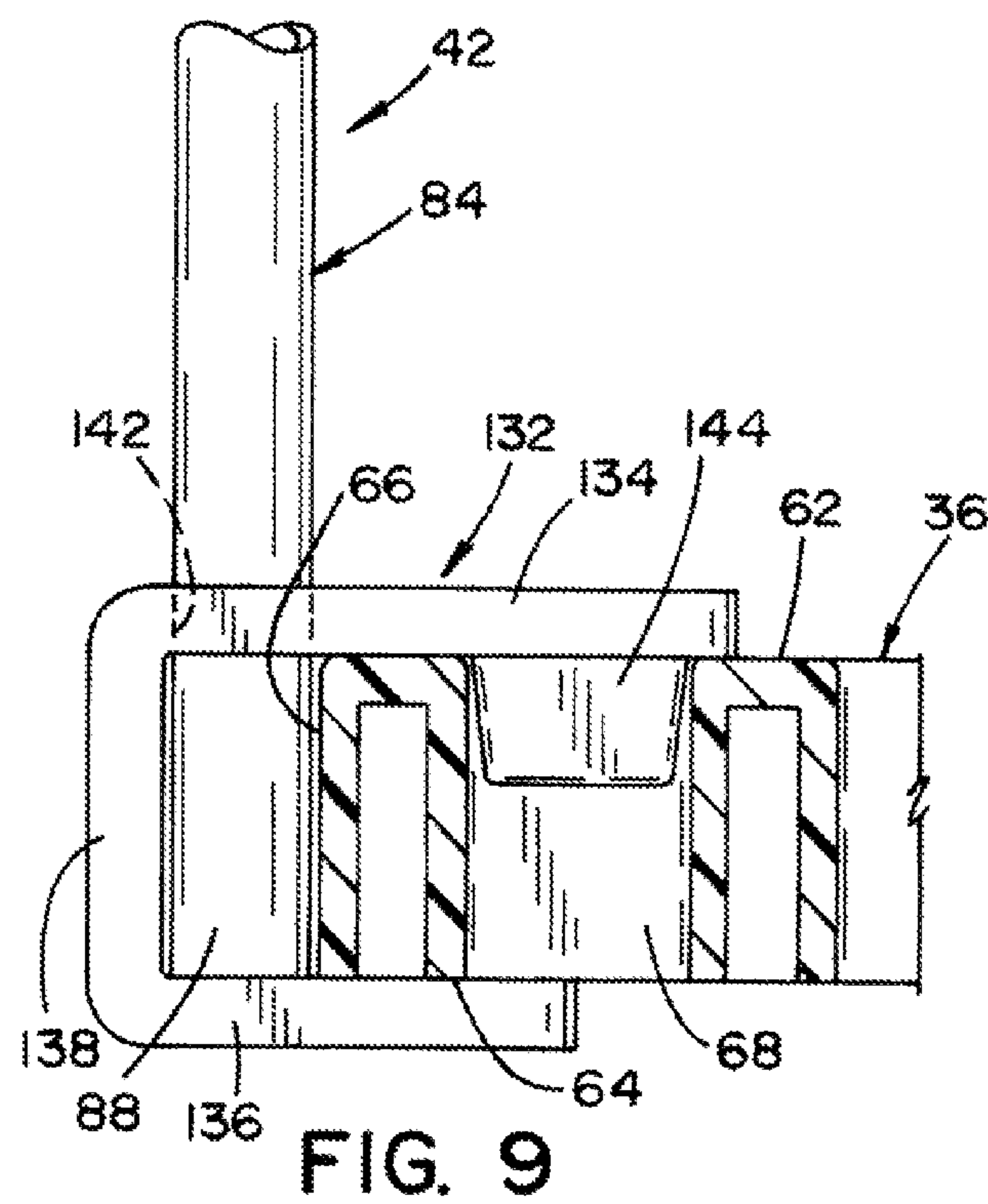
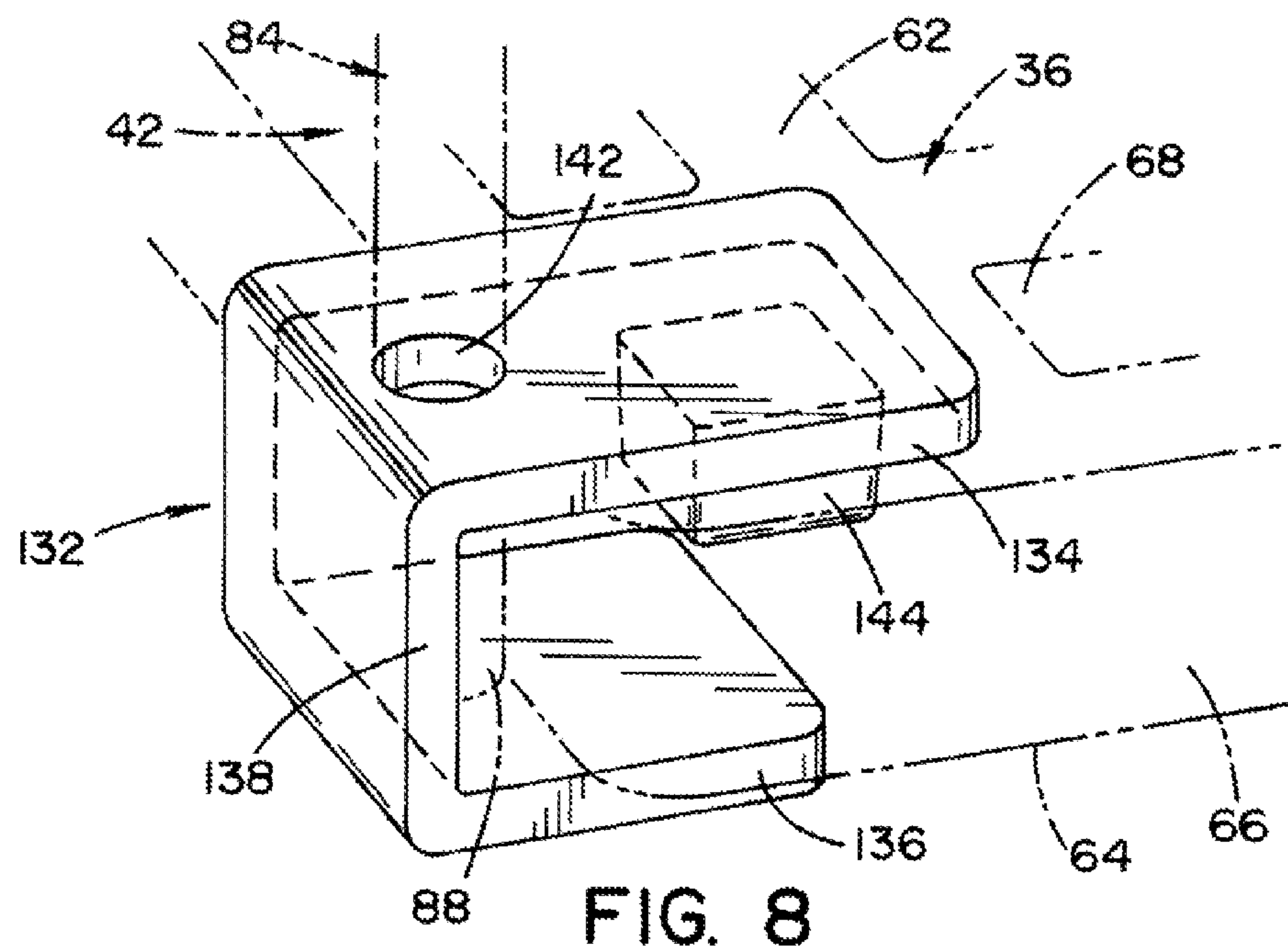
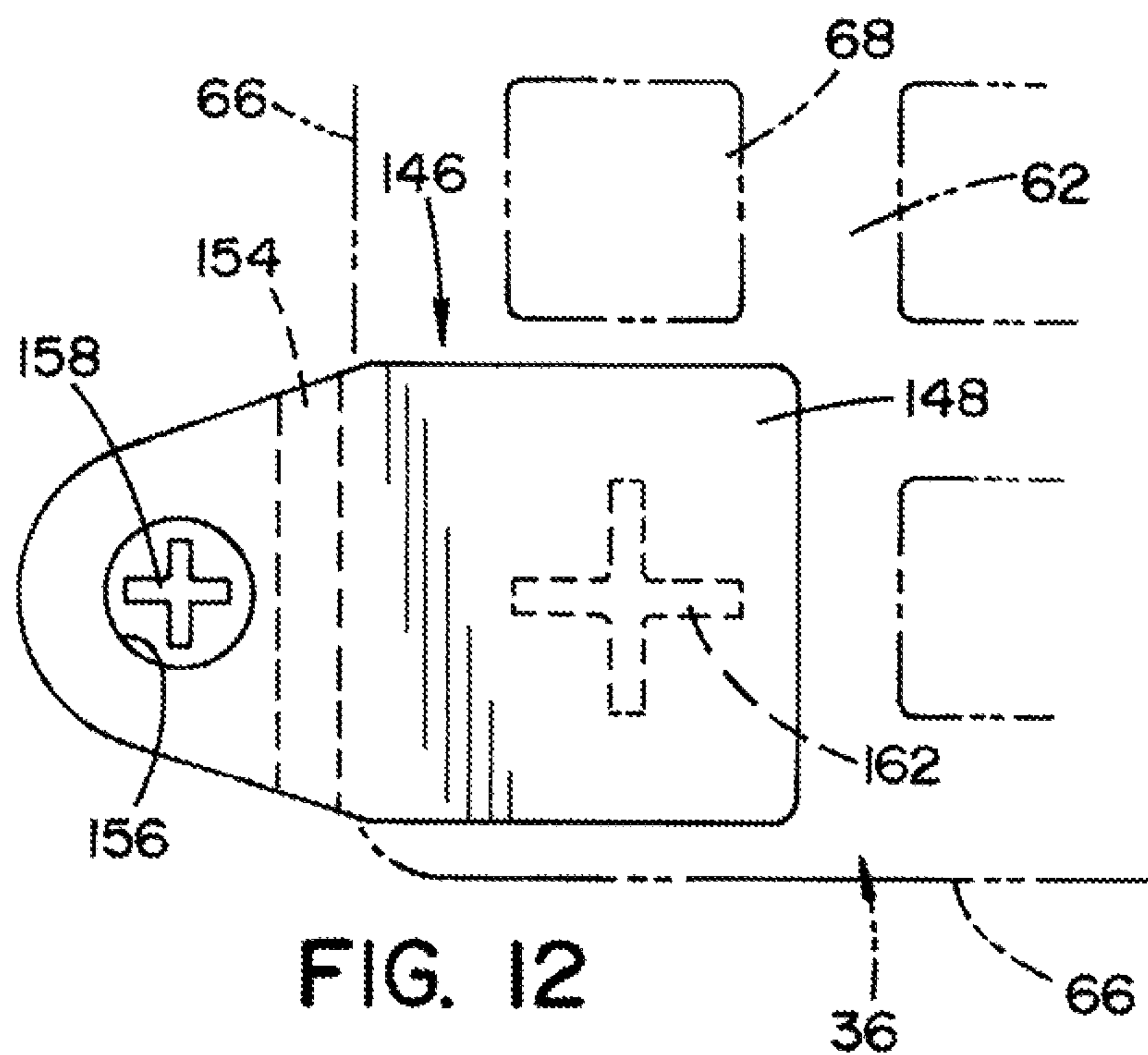
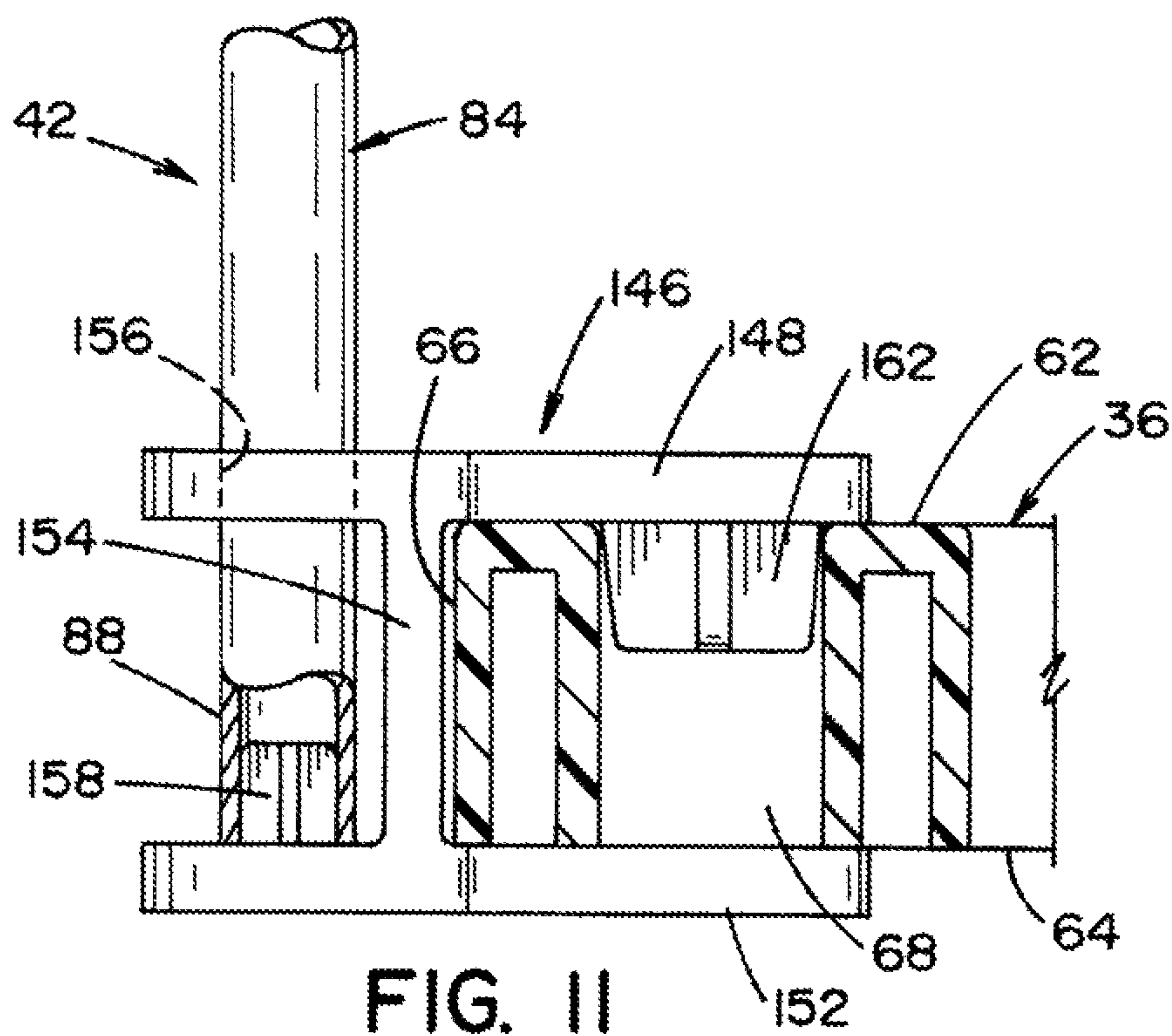
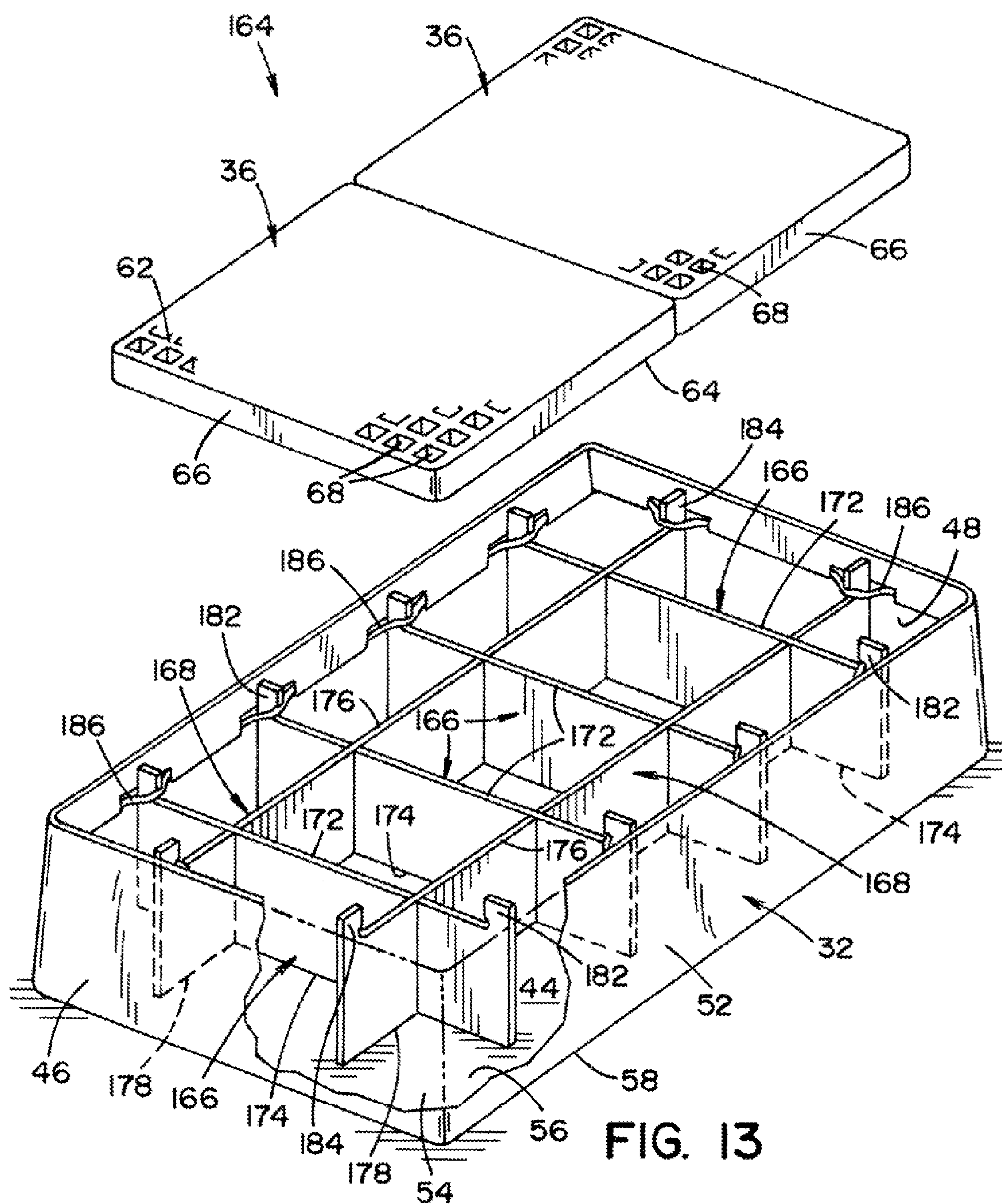
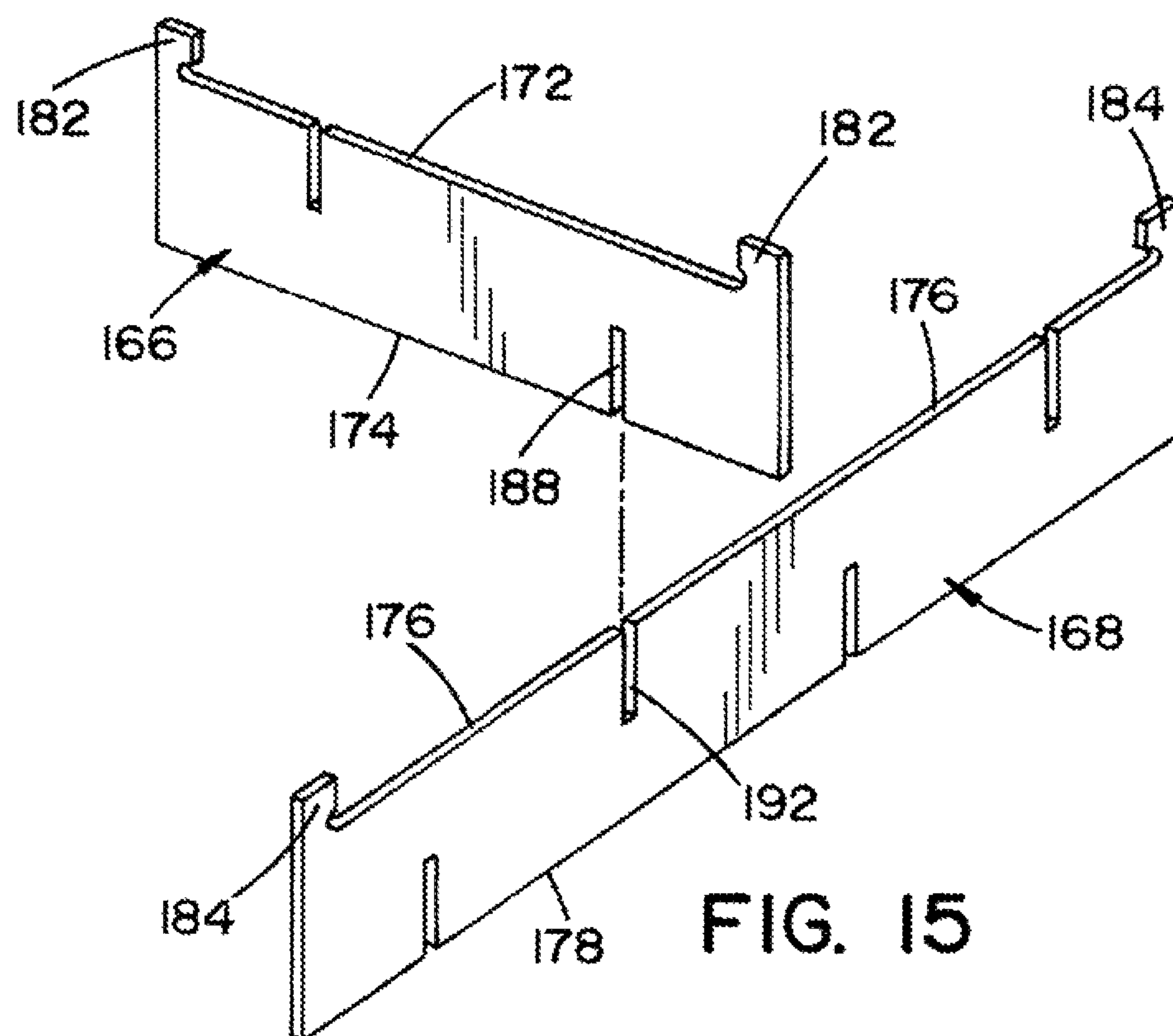
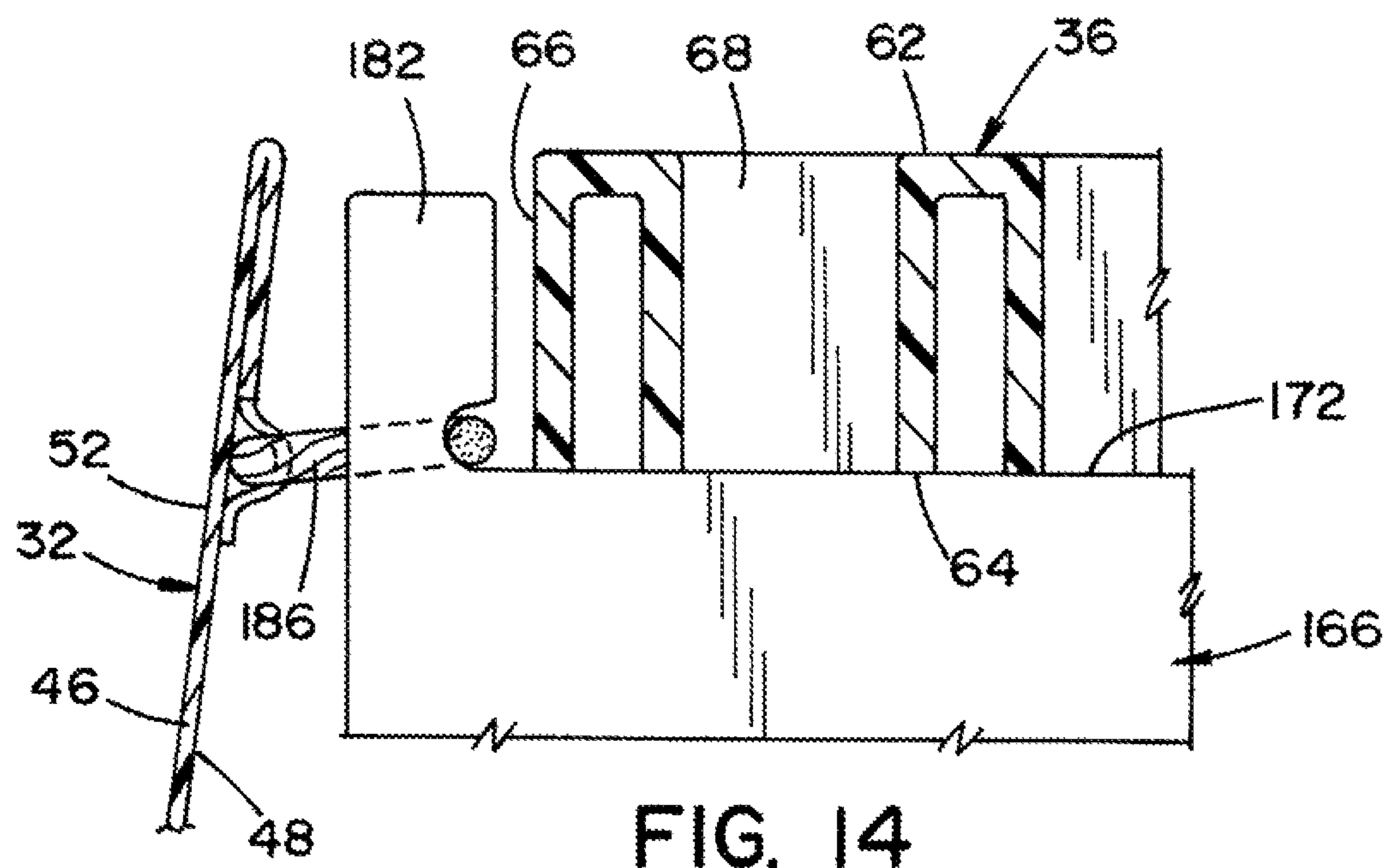


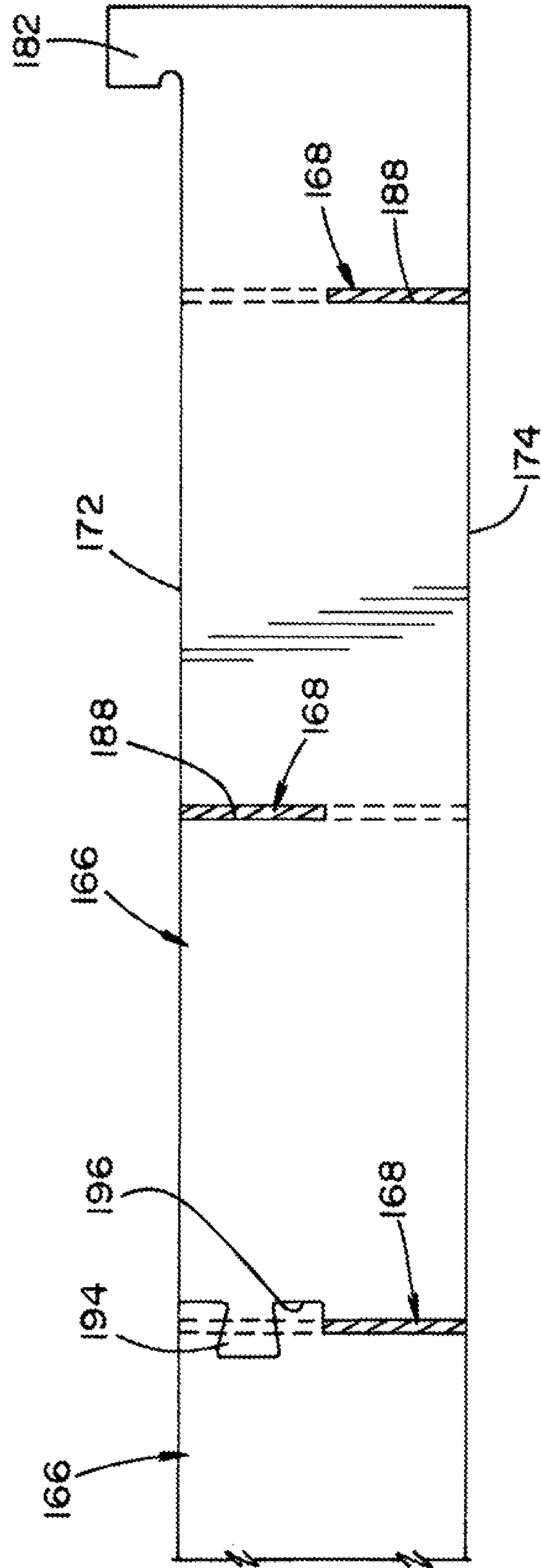
FIG. 7



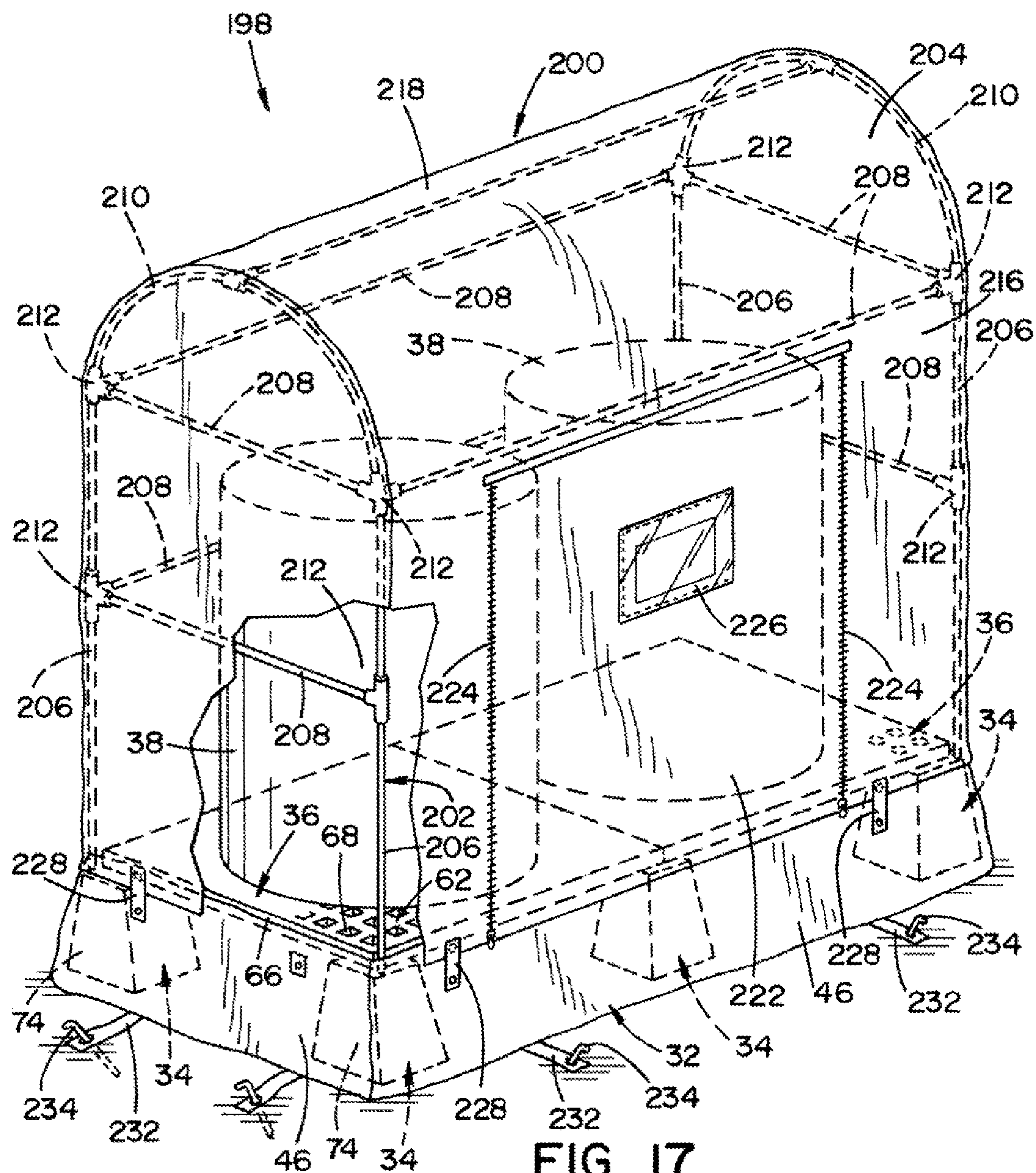








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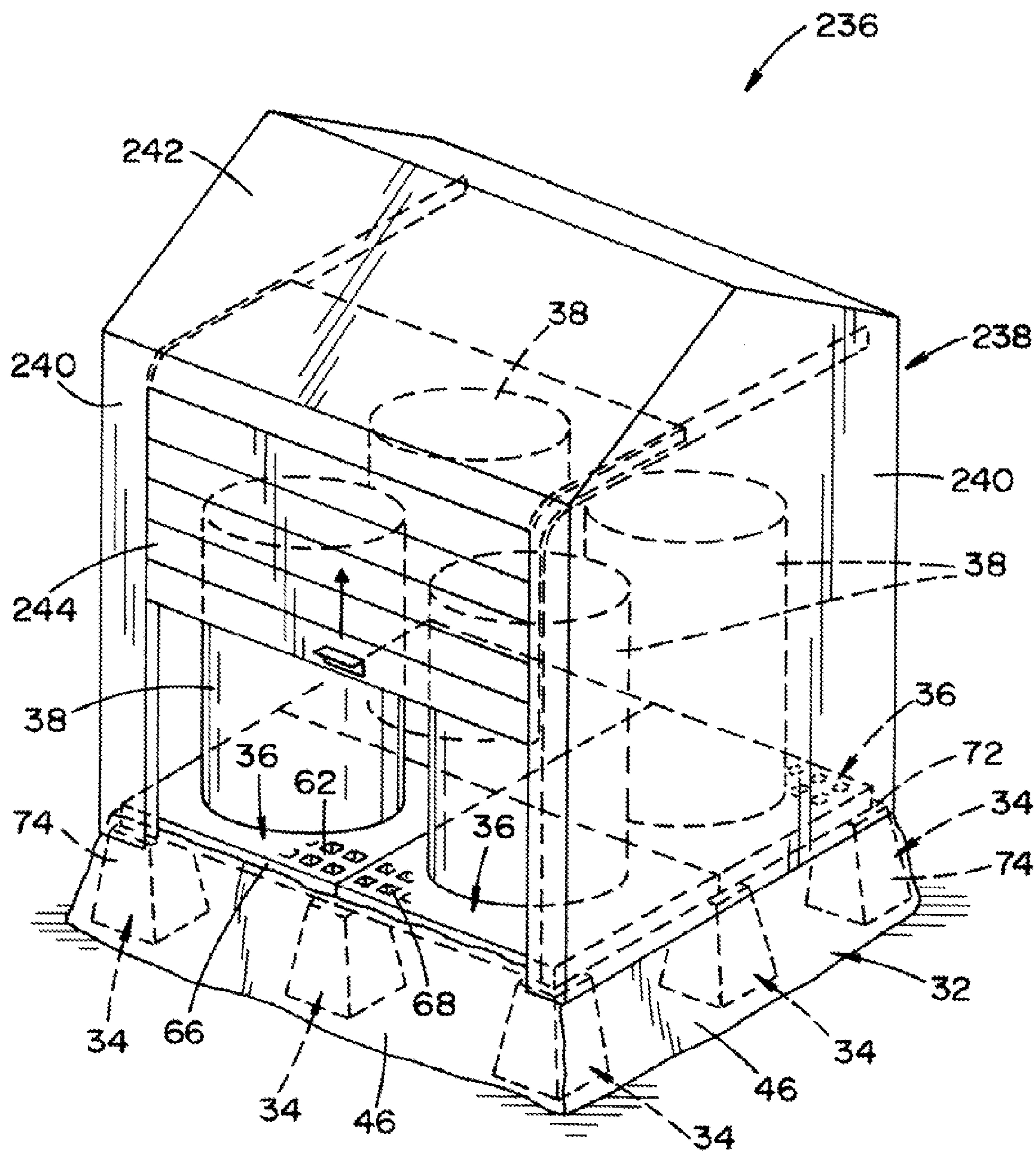
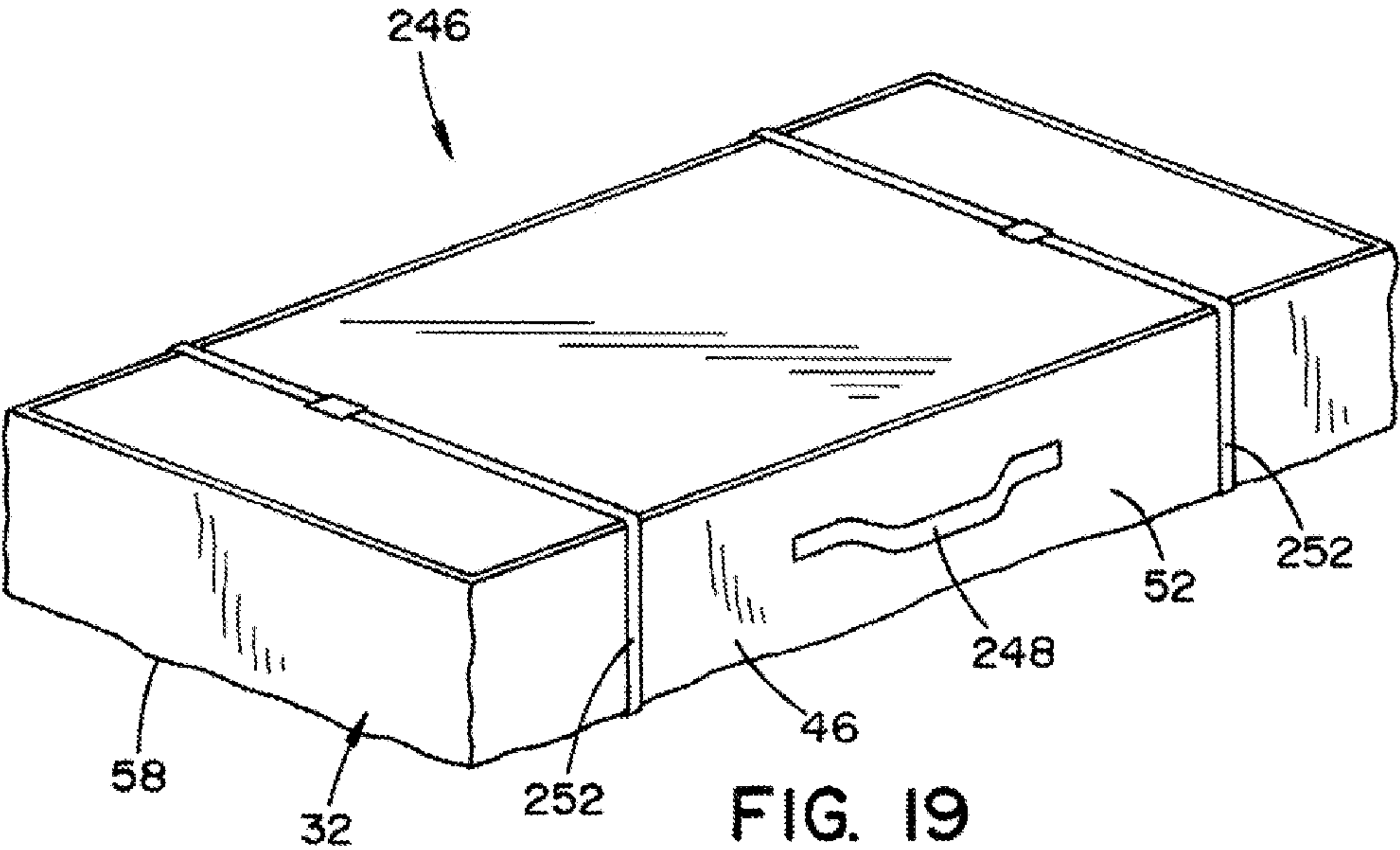


FIG. 18



METHODS FOR PROTECTING A GROUND SURFACE FROM EXPOSURE TO MATERIAL THAT MAY BE SPILLED FROM OR LEAK FROM ONE OR MORE CONTAINERS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/380,357, filed Aug. 21, 2014, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,150,350 B2, which is a U.S. National Stage of PCT/US2013/027026, filed Feb. 21, 2013, and claims priority to U.S. Provisional App. Ser. No. 61/601,246, filed Feb. 21, 2012.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of Invention

The present invention relates to portable spill containment systems.

Description of Related Art

Drums or containers are commonly used to store solids or fluids. These drums or containers can sometimes leak or spill their contents during storage or use. It is desirable to contain such spilled or leaked contents to reduce the risk of damage or injury that such contents could cause.

Spill containment assemblies such as disclosed in U.S. Pat. Nos. 7,234,608 and 7,621,422, both of which are owned by the assignee of the present application, can be used to support drums or containers on grates above a flexible containment bag. Such filled containment assemblies more than adequately meet the requirements for basic spill containment. However, additional improvements and features are disclosed herein.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

According to one aspect, a portable spill containment system according to the invention includes at least one grate that supports a container. The grate defines a plurality of drain holes. The spill containment system also includes a flexible bag that contains leakage from the container that passes through the drain holes of the grate. The portable spill containment system also includes a plurality of pedestals that support the at least one grate. The pedestals each include a top wall with a primarily planar face that faces the grate. The pedestals each include a plurality of primary projections that extend from the planar face of the top wall toward the grate.

According to another aspect, a portable spill containment system includes at least one grate that supports a container. The grate defines a plurality of drain holes. The portable spill containment system also includes a flexible bag that defines an interior to contain leakage from the container that passes through the drain holes of the grate. The flexible bag includes a bag bottom and a bag sidewall. The bag bottom and the bag sidewall each include an interior surface that faces the grate and an exterior surface that is opposite the respective interior surface. The portable spill containment system also includes a plurality of first beams that are spaced from and oriented parallel to one another. The first beams each include a first beam top surfaces that faces the grate and a first beam bottom surface that is opposite the first beam top surface. The portable spill containment system also includes a plurality of second beams being spaced from one another and crossing the plurality of first beams. The second beams each include a second beam top surface that faces the grate

and a second beam bottom surface that is opposite the second beam top surface. The first beams and the second beams are disposed within the flexible bag so that at least one of the first beam top surfaces and the second beam top surfaces contacts the grate and at least of the first beam surfaces and the second beam bottom surfaces contacts the interior surface of the bag bottom of the flexible bag.

According to another aspect, a portable spill containment system includes at least one grate that supports a container. The grate defines a plurality of drain holes. The portable spill containment system also includes a plurality of pedestals that support the at least one grate. The pedestals each include a top wall with a primarily planar face that faces the grate. The pedestals each include a plurality of primary projections that extend from the planar face of the top wall toward the grate. The portable spill containment system also includes a flexible bag that receives the plurality of pedestals and contains leakage from the container that passes through the drain holes of the grate. The flexible bag includes an interior surface that faces the plurality of pedestals and an exterior surface that is opposite the interior surface. The portable spill containment system also includes a carry handle that is attached to the exterior surface of the flexible bag at a plurality of locations so as to define a loop.

According to another aspect, a portable spill containment system includes at least one grate that supports a container. The grate defines a plurality of drain holes. The portable spill containment system also includes a flexible bag that contains leakage from the container that passes through the drain holes of the grate. The portable spill containment system also includes a plurality of pedestals that support the at least one grate. The pedestals each include a top wall with a primarily planar face that faces the grate. The planar face includes at least one indentation. The grate includes at least one projection that downwardly extends toward the plurality of pedestals so as to be received by the at least one indentation.

The foregoing and other features of the invention are hereinafter more fully described and particularly pointed out in the claims, the following description setting forth in detail certain illustrative embodiments of the invention, these being indicative, however, of but a few of the various ways in which the principles of the present invention may be employed.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a portable spill containment system.

FIG. 2 is a partial perspective view of FIG. 1 with a portion of a grate removed.

FIG. 3 is a partial perspective view of FIG. 1 with a portion of a flexible bag removed.

FIG. 4 is a partial perspective view of an alternative portable spill containment system.

FIG. 5 is a partial perspective view of composite pedestals shown in FIG. 4.

FIG. 6 is a partial perspective view of an alternative portable spill containment system.

FIG. 7 is an exploded partial perspective view of an alternative portable spill containment system.

FIG. 8 is a partial perspective view of a post bracket.

FIG. 9 is a sectional view of FIG. 8.

FIG. 10 is a plan view of FIG. 8.

FIG. 11 is a partial sectional view of an alternative post bracket.

FIG. 12 is a plan view of FIG. 11.

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FIG. 13 is an exploded partial perspective view of an alternative portable containment system.

FIG. 14 is a partial sectional view of FIG. 13.

FIG. 15 is an exploded partial perspective view of FIG. 13.

FIG. 16 is a partial sectional view of FIG. 13.

FIG. 17 is a perspective view of an alternative portable containment system.

FIG. 18 is a perspective view of an alternative portable containment system.

FIG. 19 is a perspective view of an alternative portable spill containment system.

It should be understood that the descriptions and drawings herein are merely illustrative and that various modifications and changes can be made in the structures disclosed without departing from the present disclosure. In general, the figures are not to scale. It will be appreciated that the various identified components of the exemplary portable spill containment system disclosed herein are merely terms of art that may vary from one manufacturer to another and should not be deemed to limit the present disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Referring now to the drawings, wherein like numerals refer to like parts throughout the several views, FIG. 1 illustrates a portable containment system 30. The portable containment system 30 includes a flexible bag 32, a plurality of pedestals 34, and at least one grate 36. As illustrated, the grate 36 supports a container 38. Further, a railing 42 can be attached to the pedestals 34.

With reference to FIGS. 1-3 and 7, the flexible bag 32 is formed of a flexible fabric or sheet that defines an integral fluid-tight or leak-proof structure. Initially, it is noted that the term 'leakage' could include solids or liquids. The flexible bag 32 includes a bag interior 44 that is defined by the bag sidewall 46. The bag sidewall 46 includes a bag sidewall interior surface 48 and a bag sidewall exterior surface 52, which is opposite the interior surface 48. The flexible bag 32 contains any leakage that may occur from the container 38 that has passed through the grate 36.

As illustrated, the flexible bag 32 also includes a bag bottom 54 that is opposite the grate 36. For reference, the bag sidewall 46 defines an opening that receives the grate 36. The bag bottom 54 includes a bag bottom interior surface 56 and bag bottom exterior surface 58, with the bag bottom exterior surface 58 being opposite the bag bottom interior surface 56. As illustrated, the bag 32 receives the plurality of pedestals 34 and contains leakage from the container 38. The interior surfaces 48, 56 of the flexible bag 32 face the plurality of pedestals 34.

With the continued reference to FIGS. 1-3, the grate 36, which could also be referred to as a support deck, includes an upper grate surface 62 and a lower grate surface 64 and is of a generally rectangular shape. The grate 36 can be made from injection-molded or rotationally molded plastic or structured foam. The lower grate surface 64 is opposite the upper grate surface 62. The grate 36 also includes a side grate surface 66 that faces the bag sidewall 46. The grate 36 also defines a plurality of drain holes 68 that allow leakage from the container 38 to pass therethrough for collection in the bag 32. Further, the grate 36 serves to support the container 38. While illustrated as being a plurality of grates, it will be appreciated that the grate 36 could be a single grate or a plurality of grates.

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With particular attention to FIGS. 2-3 and 7, the pedestal 34 is shown. The pedestal 34 includes a pedestal top wall 72 that has a generally planar face that faces toward the grate 36. The planar face allows for a stable interface between the pedestals 34 and the grate 36. The pedestals 34 are hollow, which allows them to be stacked on atop the other in nested fashion, much like disposable drinking cups (open end down). This allows for the pedestals 34 to be shipped and stored in a compact condition. The pedestal wall 74 can define a plurality of grooves 76 that extend in a generally vertical direction. The grooves 76 increase the strength of the pedestals 34 and also allow air to enter between the pedestals 34 when they are being separated from each other (i.e., un-nested), making separation easier.

As shown in FIGS. 2-3, the pedestals 34 are single-piece, unitary construction, which can be made from injection-molded or rotationally molded plastic or structured foam. The pedestals 34 may reduce in cross-sectional size as they extend from the bag bottom 54 toward the grate 36 so as to have a tapered shape. This tapered shape allows a wide base to increase stability with a smaller top to reduce the number of drain holes 68 that are obstructed by the pedestal 34. It will be appreciated that additional pedestals could be used to support the grate 36 at positions other than the perimeter (i.e., under the center of the grate). The pedestals 34 illustrated in FIGS. 1-3 and 7 are single-piece, unitary pedestals.

The pedestals 34 include a plurality of primary projections 78 that extend from the planar face of the top wall 72 toward the grate 36 so as to be received alongside the grate 36. As illustrated, the primary projections 78 have a circular cross-section. However, it will be appreciated that other shapes are contemplated. The pedestals 34 can also include a plurality of secondary projections 82 that extend from the planar face of the top wall 72 toward the grate 36. Although the secondary projections 82 are shown as having a circular cross-section, it will be appreciated that other shapes are possible. Specifically, any shape that allows the secondary projections 82 to be received in the drain hole 68 of the grate 36 is possible. As illustrated, the primary projections 78 are disposed around a perimeter of the top wall 72 so as to at least partially surround the secondary projections 82. This arrangement helps to keep the grate 36 secured to the pedestal 34.

Further, the secondary projections 82 define a secondary projection length as they extend from the top wall 72 toward the grate 36 just as the primary projections 78 define a primary projection length as they extend from the top wall 72 toward the grate 36. As illustrated, the primary projection length is greater than the secondary projection length. This difference in projection length between the primary projections 78 and the secondary projections 82 allows for the grate 36 to be indexed to the pedestal 34 with the primary projections 78 while still providing positive engagement between the grate 34 and the secondary projections 82.

It will be appreciated that the primary and secondary projections 78, 82 described hereinabove could be part of the grate 36 instead of the pedestals 34. Specifically, alternate projections could downwardly extend from the grate 36 toward the pedestals 34 so as to provide similar engagement between the grate 36 and the pedestals 36 as previously described. It will also be appreciated that if alternate projections extending from the grate were utilized, that the pedestals could include at least one bore or indentation provided in the top wall to receive the respective projections. Further, it will be understood that a combination of projections extending from the grate and projections extending

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from the pedestal could simultaneously be employed without departing from the scope of the invention.

With reference to FIGS. 1-2, a plurality of posts **84** are shown. The posts **84** each include a first end **86** and a second end **88**, with the second end **88** being opposite the first end **86**. The plurality of posts **84** are joined to one another by a connecting rail **92** that attaches near the first end **86** of each of the posts **84**. Further, the posts **84** can be attached to the pedestals **34** at the second end **88** of the respective posts **84**. As such, the second end **88** of the respective post **84** can receive at least a portion of the primary projection **78** of the pedestal **34**. Therefore, the posts **84** can be mounted to the pedestal **34** without the use of additional hardware, thereby minimizing cost and simplifying assembly of the system.

With reference to FIGS. 4-5, an alternative containment system **90** with a composite pedestal **94** is shown. The composite pedestal **94** can be made of the same materials as the pedestal **34**. Further, the composite pedestal **94** can also be hollow. The composite pedestal **94** can include an upper pedestal member **96** with a sidewall **98** and a top wall **102**. The composite pedestal **94** can also include a lower pedestal member **104** with a sidewall **106** and a top wall **108**.

The lower pedestal member **104** can include a raised rim **112**. This raised rim **112** can be used to prevent lateral disengagement between the upper pedestal member **96** and the lower pedestal member **104**. The lower pedestal member **104** can also include a base ring **114**. This base ring increases a general footprint of the pedestal **94** to increase stability while being received with the bag **32**.

As illustrated, the lower pedestal member **104** can also include a bead **116** and the upper pedestal member **96** can include a column **118**. The bead **116** and the column **118** cooperate to assist when the respective pedestal members **96**, **104** are respectively nested, similar in function to the groove **76**. As shown, a block **122** may be used as an interface between the grate **36** and the composite pedestal **94**. The block **122** may optionally be used to adjust an overall height of the grate **36**. As shown in FIG. 5, the composite pedestal **94** includes primary projections **78** and secondary projections **82** as like the pedestal **34**.

The composite pedestal **94** allows for customization. Specifically, depending upon the particular needs, the end user could use only upper pedestal member **96** or the lower pedestal member **104** to support the grate **36**. Alternatively, the end user could use both the upper pedestal member **96** and the lower pedestal member **104** to form taller pedestal structures. Thus, for small volume containment needs or in instances when the grate **36** is going to be used to store a drum or container in a workstation configuration, a shorter single pedestal member could be used. However, in instances when a pallet of drums was going to be stored and the volume of potentially leakable materials is greater, taller multi-component pedestals could be used.

As illustrated in FIG. 5, the bag **32** can include a pocket **124** that receives the primary projection **78** so as to attach the bag **32** to the pedestal **34**, **94**. Specifically, at least one of the primary projections **78** can at least be partially inserted through the pocket **124**. The pocket **124** may be made of the same or similar materials as the bag **32**. Alternatively, the pocket **124** may be made of other materials that provide sufficient strength to connect the bag **32** to the pedestal **34**. Further, the pocket **124** may be integral to the bag **32** or a separate component.

With reference to FIG. 6, an alternate containment system **120** is shown. The bag **32** can include a sidewall flap **126**. The sidewall flap **126** at least partially extends onto the upper grate surface **62** of the grate **36**. The sidewall flap **126**

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may be of the same material and construction as the bag sidewall **46**. The sidewall flap **126** may be affixed to the grate **36** with adhesive tape **128**. This tape **128** may be used solely to attach the bag **32** to the pedestal **34**, **94** or in addition to other attachment methods.

With reference to FIG. 7, an alternate containment system **129** is shown. The alternate containment system **129** utilizes the bag **32** and pedestal **34** to contain any leakage that has passed through the drain holes **68** of the grate **36**. However, the alternate containment system **129** also includes a mounting member **130**. The mounting member **130** is disposed between the pedestal **34** and the grate **36** to ensure that the bag sidewall **46** of the bag **32** remains sufficiently vertical so as provide an adequate volume for capturing the leakage. As illustrated, the mounting member **130** includes mounting holes **131** that receive the primary projections **78**. The mounting member **130** may be integral to the bag **32** or may be a separate component that is connected to the bag **32**. As such, the mounting member **130** may be made of any material that provides sufficient strength to retain the bag sidewall **46** in a generally upright position. Because the mounting member **130** is disposed between the pedestal **34** and the grate **36**, the mounting member **130** is exposed to downward force due to the weight of the container **38** (i.e., a compressive force between the pedestal **34** and the grate **36**). As such, the connection strength between the bag **32** and the pedestal **34** improves as the weight of the container **38** on the grate **36** is increased.

With reference to FIGS. 8-12, post brackets are shown. The post brackets can be used to mount the post **84** to the grate **36**. The post brackets can be used in addition to or in place of mounting the post **84** to the primary projections **78**. Further, the post brackets can be made of any number of materials that provide sufficient strength and rigidity to support the post **84** as will be described in more detail hereinafter.

With reference to FIGS. 8-10, a clamp **132** is used as a post bracket. The clamp **132** includes an upper wall **134**, a lower wall **136**, and a connecting wall **138**. The upper wall **134** defines a posthole **142**. The grate **36** is disposed between the upper wall **134** and the lower wall **136**. Because of the shape of the clamp **132**, the clamp **132** can be securely connected to the grate **36**, while still permitting removal of the clamp **132** from the grate **36** when desired.

In particular, the posthole **142** receives the post **84** to allow for easy attachment of the post **84** to the grate **36**. Specifically, the first end **86** of the post **84** is vertically spaced from the grate **36** a distance that is greater than a vertical distance between the second end **88** of the post **84** and the grate **36**. The bracket can further include a retention member **144** that extends from the upper wall **134** toward the lower wall **136** so as to be received at least one of the drain holes **68**. The retention member **144** can have a square cross-sectional shape. This shape complements the shape of the drain hole **68** for sufficient engagement. The connecting wall **138** joins the upper wall **134** and the lower wall **136** so that the post **84** is disposed between the connecting wall **138** and the grate **36**, thereby ensuring a sturdy connection.

With reference to FIGS. 11-12, an alternate bracket is shown as a clip **146**. The clip **146** can include an upper wall **148** and a lower wall **152**. A partition wall **154** joins the upper wall **148** and the lower wall **152** together so that the partition wall **154** is disposed between the post **84** and the grate **36**. The upper wall **148** can also include a post aperture **156** for receipt of the post **84**. Further still, a post boss **158** can extend from the lower wall **152** toward the upper wall **148** so as to be in registry with the post aperture **156** for

engagement with the second end of the post **84**. The post boss **158** provides additional stability to the connection between the post **84** and the clip **146**. The clip **146** can also include a retention projection **162** with an X-shaped cross-section. The retention projection **162** extends from the upper wall **148** toward the lower wall **152** and is received in the drain holes **68** of the grate **36**. The X-shaped cross-section of the retention projection **162** helps to minimize weight and material cost for the clip **146** while still providing sufficient engagement between the clip **146** and the grate **36**.

With reference to FIGS. 13-16, an alternate containment system **164** is shown. The containment system **164** can include a first beam **166** and a second beam **168**. The beams **166**, **168** can have a generally rectangular shape and be made of any number of materials. It is envisioned that the beams **166**, **168** be constructed of materials that are chemically inert and lightweight. However, other materials are possible and contemplated. The first beams **166** are spaced from and oriented parallel to one another. Further, the first beams **166** each include a first beam top surface **172** that faces the grate **36** and a first beam bottom surface **174** that is opposite the first beam top surface **172**.

The second beams **168** are spaced from one another. As illustrated, the second beams **168** are oriented perpendicular to the plurality of first beams **166**. However, it will be understood that the second beams **168** could be oriented to the plurality of first beams **168** in alternative layouts. The second beams **168** can each include a second beam top surface **176** that faces the grate **36** and a second beam bottom surface **178** that is opposite the second beam top surface **176**. The first beams **166** and the second beams **168** are disposed within the flexible bag **32** so that at least one of the first beam top surfaces **172** and the second beam top surfaces **176** contacts the grate **36** and at least one of the first beam bottom surfaces **174** and the second beam bottom surfaces **178** contacts the interior surface of the bag bottom **54** of the bag **32**. The first beams **166** and the second beams **168** can include beam fingers **182**, **184**, respectively. It will be appreciated that the first and second beams **166**, **168** could be spaced from one another greater than is illustrated so as to create a large void in a center of the assembly so as to create a picture frame type support. As the number of beams **166**, **168** is reduced, the storage capacity of the bag **32** is increased.

As shown in FIG. 14, the flexible bag **34** may include a plurality of yokes **186** that extend toward the interior of the flexible bag **32**. The yokes **186** may be made of the same or similar material as the bag **32**. Alternatively, the yokes **186** may be made of any other material while provides sufficient strength to hold the bag **32** to the beams **166**, **168** when the bag **32** is full of leaked material. The fingers **182**, **184** can removably engage the yokes **186** of the bag **32** to attach the bag **32** to the beams **166**, **168**.

With reference to FIG. 15, the first beam **166** and the second beam **168** are shown in an exploded view. The first beam **166** can include a joining channel **188** and the second beam **168** can include a joining channel **192**. The joining channels **188**, **192** cooperate with one another to allow assembly of the first beams **166** and second beams **168** together in a structurally rigid configuration as illustrated.

With reference to FIG. 16, the first beam **166** is shown. As illustrated, the first beam **166** can include a tab **194** and slot **196**. The tab **194** and the slot **196** complement one another to allow shorter lengths of the first beam **166** to be combined to increase the overall length. It will be appreciated that a similar type of tab/slot layout could be used with the second beam **168**.

With reference to FIG. 17, an alternative spill containment system **198** with an enclosure is shown. This system **198** includes a canopy **200**. The canopy includes a frame **202** that supports a covering **204**. The frame **202** includes a plurality of upright members **206**, linear connection members **208**, and curved connection members **210**. These members **206**, **208**, **210** are held together with a variety of connectors **212**. The frame **202** cooperates with the covering **204** to define a shell wall **216** and a shell top **218**. Further, a shell door **222** is affixed to the shell wall **216** with a zipper **224** to allow access within the canopy **200**. Further, a document window **226** can be used to retain various documents associated with the materials located within the container **38**. Further still, a tie down **228** may be used to affix the shell wall **216** to the flexible bag **32**. Finally, a mounting strap **232** can be used in conjunction with a stake **234** to affix the containment system **198** to the ground or otherwise.

With reference to FIG. 18, an alternate containment system **236** with an enclosure is shown. This system **236** includes a rigid structure **238** with panels **240** and a roof **242**. Further, a tambour door **244** is attached to the panels **240** with a rail arrangement to allow access to the container **38** disposed within. Although not illustrated, it will be understood that the system **236** could also include a document window **226** for holding documents.

As is considered apparent, the enclosures of FIGS. 17-18 allow the container **38** to be located between the grate **36** and the enclosure (i.e., canopy **200**, rigid structure **238**). The enclosure allows the containment assembly to be used in outdoor applications. Further, rain and other precipitation does not enter into the flexible bag **32**, but rather passes off the enclosure and onto the ground. However, materials that have leaked from the drums or contains stored on the grate **36** would be collected in the flexible bag **32**. This ensures that the bag **32** does not become prematurely filled with material that does not need to be contained.

With reference to FIG. 19, an alternate portable containment system **246** is shown. The system **246** can include a carrying handle **248** that is attached to the exterior surface **52** of the bag **32** at a plurality of locations so as to define a loop. The loop is adapted to be of sufficient size to allow for receipt of a human hand to aid in carrying the system **246**. Additionally, a plurality of packing straps **252** may encircle the flexible bag **32**. These packing straps **252** can be disposed so as to be spaced from and on opposite sides of the carrying handle **248**. The straps **252** ensure that all of the components remain within the bag **32** until deployment of the system **246** is needed.

Thus, the portable containment system **246** can be shipped or stored in a compact arrangement, not unlike a suitcase, which can be transported to an assembly location and assembled to form the containment system as illustrated in the other embodiments of the present application. Notably, the pedestals **34** and/or composite pedestals **94** could be disposed within the bag **32** during shipment or storage or could be separately located. Further still, the grate(s) **36** could be received within the bag **32** illustrated in FIG. 19 during shipment or storage. Thus, the bag **32** serves to contain the various components during shipment/storage and also capture leakage from the container placed on the grate during usage.

Additionally, advantages and modifications will readily occur to those skilled in the art. Therefore, the invention in its broader aspects is not limited to the specific details and illustrative examples shown and described herein. Accordingly, various modifications may be made without departing

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from the scope or spirit of the general inventive concept as defined by the appended claims and their equivalence.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for protecting a ground surface from exposure to material that may be spilled from or leak from one or more containers, the method comprising:

arranging, on the ground surface, a flexible bag having a bag bottom and a bag sidewall that cooperate to define an interior;

interconnecting a plurality of separate and distinct first beams and a plurality of separate and distinct second beams together to form an interconnected grid structure disposed in the interior of the flexible bag;

placing at least one perforated grate on the interconnected grid structure disposed in the interior of the flexible bag such that the at least one perforated grate is supported above the bag bottom by the interconnected grid structure; and

placing the one or more containers of material onto the at least one perforated grate supported above the bag bottom by the interconnected grid structure disposed in the interior of the flexible bag.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the flexible bag is in a folded condition before the flexible bag is arranged on the ground surface, and wherein the method further comprises unfolding the flexible bag.

3. The method according to claim 2, wherein the method further comprises shipping the flexible bag in the folded condition together with the plurality of separate and distinct first beams, the plurality of separate and distinct second beams and the at least one perforated grate.

4. The method according to claim 3, wherein the plurality of separate and distinct first beams, the plurality of separate and distinct second beams and the at least one perforated grate are wrapped inside the flexible bag when the flexible bag is shipped in the folded condition.

5. A method for protecting a ground surface from exposure to material that may be spilled from or leak from one or more containers, the method comprising:

arranging, on the ground surface, a flexible bag having a bag bottom and a bag sidewall that cooperate to define an interior;

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disposing a plurality of pedestals within the interior of the bag, each of said plurality of pedestals including a top wall with a primarily planar face, and at least one primary projection and at least one secondary projection, both of which project upwardly from the primarily planar face;

placing at least one perforated grate on the plurality of pedestals disposed within the interior of the bag such that the at least one perforated grate rests in contact with the primarily planar face of the plurality of pedestals between the at least one primary projection and the at least one secondary projection and the at least one perforated grate is supported above the bag bottom by the plurality of pedestals; and

placing the one or more containers of material onto the at least one perforated grate supported above the bag bottom by the plurality of pedestals disposed in the interior of the flexible bag.

6. The method according to claim 5, wherein the flexible bag is in a folded condition before the flexible bag is arranged on the ground surface, and wherein the method further comprises unfolding the flexible bag.

7. The method according to claim 6, wherein the method further comprises shipping the flexible bag in the folded condition together with the plurality of pedestals and the at least one perforated grate.

8. The method according to claim 7, wherein the plurality of pedestals and the at least one perforated grate are wrapped inside the flexible bag when the flexible bag is shipped in the folded condition.

9. The method according to claim 7, wherein the plurality of pedestals have a hollow interior and are nested together in a stack when shipped.

10. The method according to claim 5, wherein the flexible bag includes a plurality of pockets, and wherein the method further comprises inserting the primary projections of the plurality of pedestals disposed within the interior of the bag into respective pockets such that the primary projections function as hooks that hold up the bag sidewall.

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